

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DUBLIN 00800 201643Z

64

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 DRC-01 /115 W
----- 094576

R 201500Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5732

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST

C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 0800

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PBOR, EI, UK(NI)

SUBJ: GOI ASSESSMENT OF NI SITUATION

SUMMARY: WHILE GOI DOES NOT EXPECT IMMEDIATE INCREASE IN NI VIOLENCE, LONG-RANGE ASSESSMENT IS NOW VERY PESSIMISTIC. GOI HOPES POWER-SHARING CAN BE TRIED AGAIN AFTER AUTUMN ELECTIONS, BUT SOURCE FRANKLY DOUBTS IT WILL WORK. NI PUBLIC IS VERY POLARIZED SINCE COLLAPSE OF SUNNINGDALE PACKAGE. FOR FIRST TIME, GOI, IN PRIVATE, IS DISCUSSING POSSIBILITY OF MASS VIOLENCE BETWEEN COMMUNITIES. EMBASSY TAKES GOI ASSESSMENT SERIOUSLY BUT IS NOT QUITE AS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT CHANCES FOR REVIVING POWER-SHARING. END SUMMARY.

1. SEAN DONLON IN FONOFF GAVE US MOST PESSIMISTIC ASSESSMENT OF NI SITUATION WE HAVE EVER HAD FROM OFFICIAL GOI SOURCE. DONLON SAID, HOWEVER, THAT HIS PESSIMISM WAS FOR LONG TERM; OVER SHORT TERM HE DID NOT EXPECT SHARP INCREASE IN NI VIOLENCE.

2. SOURCE SAID GOI SAW NO HOPE OF REBUILDING POWER SHARING NI EXECUTIVE ON BASIS OF CURRENT ASSEMBLY MEMBERS. BRITISH MUST GO THROUGH MOTIONS OF TRYING TO RECONSTRUCT GOVERNMENT, BUT, ACCORDING TO SOURCE, BOTH LONDON AND DUBLIN REALIZE THAT ATTEMPT IS FUTILE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 DUBLIN 00800 201643Z

3. GOI, THEREFORE, ACCEPTS INEVITABILITY OF A NEW ELECTION, ALTHOUGH

THIS IS BITTER PILL TO SWALLOW. ELECTION WILL PROBABLY BE HELD NEXT AUTUMN. SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER ARE LIKELY DATES UNLESS BRITISH GENERAL ELECTION IS HELD AT THIS TIME, IN WHICH CASE NI POLL WOULD HAVE TO BE DELAYED A MONTH OR TWO. NI ELECTIONS MUST COME AFTER THOSE FOR BRITAIN AS A WHOLE, BECAUSE--AS NI MODERATE RECENTLY LEARNED TO THEIR SORROW--WESTMINSTER ELECTIONS TEND TO GIVE EXTREME RESULTS. NI ELECTIONS, ON OTHER HAND, ARE BASED ON PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION, GIVING MODERATES A BETTER CHANCE.

4. EVEN THOUGH ELECTIONS ARE INEVITABLE, GOI OPPOSES ANY EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT ON SUBJECT. FOR THE MOMENT, AN ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD FURTHER UNDERCUT MODERATES AND MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR NEW NI DIALOGUE TO BEGIN BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL SHADES OF OPINION. SOURCE CONSIDERS SUCH DIALOGUE MOST IMPORTANT.

5. AT MOMENT, THERE ARE DEEP DIVISIONS NOT ONLY BETWEEN NI PARTIES BUT WITHIN ALL PARTIES. SDLP IS SPLIT BETWEEN REPUBLICAN WING AND MODERATE WING. MODERATES CAN ACCEPT POWER-SHARING NI GOVERNMENT WITHOUT ANY TIMETABLE FOR "IRISH DIMENSION" (LINKS BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH). REPUBLICAN WING WANTS QUICKER PROGRESS ON IRISH DIMENSION. ALL IN SDLP ARE MUCH MORE MODERATE THAN IRA; NEVERTHELESS, THERE IS LONG TERM HAZARD THAT SDLP COULD FAIL, FRACTURE, AND LET CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SLIP BACK TOWARD PROVOS. ON PROTESTANT SIDE, FAULKNER UNIONISTS ARE MORIBUND AND THEIR FUTURE IS VERY DOUBTFUL. LOYALISTS ARE SPLIT THREE WAYS: PARAMILITARY, WORKERS, AND POLITICIANS. POLITICIANS LIKE PAISLEY AND WEST DO NOT WANT AN EARLY ELECTION, AS THEY FEAR LOSING OUT TO WORKERS AND PARAMILITARY TYPES.

6 DONLON'S EXPECTATION FOR LOW SHORT-TERM VIOLENCE IS BASED ON ASSUMPTION THAT LOYALISTS WILL BE SMART ENOUGH TO RELAX A LITTLE AFTER RECENT VICTORY. IF, ON OTHER HAND, THEY DECIDE TO USE TRADITIONAL SUMMER MARCHES TO RUB SALT INTO WOUNDS OF CATHOLICS, GOI PROJECTION COULD BE UPSET. DUBLIN AND LONDON WILL MAINTAIN VERY LOW PROFILE TO AVOID PROVOCATION.

7. EVEN PROVO IRA MAY ALSO MAINTAIN FAIRLY LOW PROFILE, DESPITE RECENT BOMBINGS. THERE HAS BEEN MAJOR CHANGE IN PROVO THINKING. THEY HAVE SUDDENLY REALIZED THAT THEY ARE, IN FACT--WITH "LOYALIST" HELP--NEARING THEIR GOAL OF GETTING BRITISH OUT OF IRELAND.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 DUBLIN 00800 201643Z

AS THIS REALIZATION SINKS IN, PROVOS ARE FINALLY BEGINNING TO WORRY ABOUT THEIR ABILITY TO DEFEND CATHOLIC GHETTOS. WORRY WAS REFLECTED RECENTLY BY RORY O BRAIDGH WHO SAID THAT BRITISH SHOULD NOT LEAVE A "BELGIAN CONGO" SITUATION (DUBLIN 0608). DAITHI O'CONNELL MADE SIMILAR STATEMENT ON BBC TELEVISION. SOURCE BELIEVES PROVOS ARE FINALLY AWARE THAT CATHOLIC SIDE COULD NOT WIN ANY SHARP CONFRONTATION. LONDON AND DUBLIN HAVE BEEN AWARE OF THIS FOR A VERY LONG TIME.

8. PROTESTANT EXTREMISTS HAVE NOT REALIZED MEANING OF RECENT EVENTS AS CLEARLY AS IRA. PROTESTANTS, ACCORDING TO SOURCE, STILL DO NOT REALIZE THAT BRITISH ARE PREPARED TO PULL OUT AND THAT END OF BRITISH SUBSIDIES FOR NI ECONOMY WOULD HAVE DRAMATIC EFFECT ON STANDARD OF LIVING.

9. COMMENTING ON BRITISH ATTITUDES, SOURCE ACCEPTED THAT THEY STILL INTEND TO DO RIGHT THING, BUT PRESSURE FOR WITHDRAWAL IS INCREASING FROM ENGLISH PUBLIC. IN ADDITION TO DUBLIN FEARS OF OUTRIGHT WITHDRAWAL, GOI IS ALMOST AS CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBILITY THAT LONDON WILL MAKE "DECLARATION OF INTENT" TO WITHDRAW AT FIXED TIME IN FUTURE. THIS COULD HAVE EFFECT NEARLY AS FRIGHTENING AS WITHDRAWAL ITSELF. ON OTHER HAND, SOURCE BELIEVED THAT BRITISH ARE NOW WELL AWARE OF DIFFICULTY IN REFORMING ATTITUDES OF PROTESTANT COMMUNITY. SOURCE SAID, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT BRITISH NOW ACCEPT THAT EVEN NI POLICE (RUC) ARE NOW LOYAL TO PROTESTANT COMMUNITY RATHER THAN TO BRITAIN. (COMMENT: IN GENERAL WE THINK ATTITUDES IN DUBLIN ARE CHANGING AT LEAST AS FAST AS THOSE IN LONDON.)

10. BEFORE NI ELECTIONS ARE HELD NEXT AUTUMN, SOURCE BELIEVES BRITAIN WILL MAKE CLEAR THAT THEY ARE TO BE "CONSTITUENT ELECTIONS." FORMAL STATEMENT FROM LONDON WILL MAKE CLEAR THAT THERE IS TIME LIMIT ON BRITISH GUARANTEES UNLESS BOTH COMMUNITIES ACCEPT PRINCIPLE OF POWER SHARING. IF ALL GOES WELL IN PERIOD BEFORE ELECTIONS, DUBLIN HAS SOME HOPE THEY WILL PRODUCE SHARP SPLIT IN PROTESTANT RANKS, BETWEEN MODERATES AND LOYALISTS EXTREMES. CATHOLIC MINORITY WOULD THEN HOLD BALANCE OF POWER, WHICH COULD BE ONE SMALL RAY OF HOPE.

11. DUBLIN NOW ACCEPTS THAT NEW TRY AT NI SOLUTION MUST BE BASED ON POWER-SHARING ALONE. THERE MAY BE NO RAPID PROGRESS ON IRISH

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 DUBLIN 00800 201643Z

DIMENSION FOR LONG TIME, PERHAPS EVEN A GENERATION. (COMMENT: THIS IS VERY BIG CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS DUBLIN POSITION THAT THERE MUST BE PACKAGE APPROACH TO NI SOLUTION.) UNFORTUNATELY, DUBLIN IS NOT AT ALL SURE THAT SDLP CAN SURVIVE THIS CHANGE. FACT IS THAT EVEN FULL SUNNINGDALE PACKAGE WOULD HAVE BEEN BARELY SUFFICIENT TO GIVE CATHOLICS FULL EQUALITY WITH PROTESTANTS. ANYTHING LESS THAN SUNNINGDALE WOULD BE ASKING CATHOLICS TO ACCEPT REMAINING AN UNDER PRIVILEGED MINORITY FOR A LONG TIME, WHICH IS OBVIOUSLY DIFFICULT FOR ELECTED POLITICIANS.

12. WHEN ASKED FOR HIS MOST REALISTIC GUESS, SOURCE REPLIED THAT, FRANKLY, HE HAD LITTLE HOPE OF SUCCESSFUL POWER-SHARING EVEN AFTER NEXT AUTUMN'S ELECTIONS. IN THIS CASE, NORTHERN IRELAND WOULD CONTINUE DOWNHILL ON SLIPPERY SLOPE. IT COULD BECOME VERY DIFFICULT TO AVOID MASS CONFLICT MIGRATION, AND

VERY HIGH LEVEL OF HUMAN SUFFERING. BRITISH WOULD BE TEMPTED TO WITHDRAW, AND THERE COULD BE EVOLUTION TOWARD PALESTINE SITUATION.

13. WE ALSO ASKED FOR ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOME IF THERE WERE MASS CONFRONTATION BETWEEN COMMUNITIES. SOURCE GAVE HIS ASSESSMENT FOR FIRST TIME. HE BELIEVED THAT PROTESTANT EXTREMISTS WOULD TAKE OVER MOST AREAS EVEN IN WESTERN AREAS, THOUGH PROVO IRA WOULD CONTROL LIMITED AREAS. PROTESTANTS WOULD THEN BE ABLE TO "TURN OFF THE TAP" ON VITAL SUPPLIES TO CATHOLIC AREA. CATHOLICS WOULD HAVE TO WITHSTAND SIEGE OR EMIGRATE.

14. STILL ON PESSIMISTIC NOTE, SOURCE SAID THAT GOVT FEARED REACTIONS OF SOUTHERN PUBLIC TO WORSENING NORTH EVENTS. PUBLIC HERE HAS BEEN SO BADLY INFORMED FOR SO LONG THAT PEOPLE ARE LIKELY TO MISUNDERSTAND AND MAKE WRONG MOVES. IN NEAR FUTURE, PUBLIC WOULD HAVE TO ACCEPT LOW DUBLIN PRFILE, WHICH WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND. THERE IS EVEN SOME PRESSURE HERE FOR BRITISH DECLARATION OF INTENT, WHICH IS INCREDIBLY MISGUIDED.

15. AT SEVERAL POINTS IN INTERVIEW, SOURCE COMMENTED ON MANNER IN WHICH FALL OF EXECUTIVE HAS INCREASED POLARIZATION BETWEEN COMMUNITIES. HIS PHRASE WAS "BOTH SIDES HAVE GONE BACK TO THEIR ANTHILLS." THIS IS A VARIATION OF THE "TRIBAL" ANALOGY WHICH HAS OFTEN BEEN USED, WITH MUCH ACCURACY.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 DUBLIN 00800 201643Z

16 COMMENT: SOURCE IS RELIABLE, SERIOUS, AND STABLE, SO HIS PESSIMISM MUST WEIGH HEAVILY IN OUR ASSESSMENT. NI SITUATION HAS INDEED MOVED TOWARD NEGATIVE OPTION WHICH HAS LONG BEEN AT TOP OF EVERYONE'S FEARS. AT SAME TIME, THERE IS STILL A WELL-KNOWN POSITIVE OPTION: POWER-SHARING. IT HAS BEEN SET BACK BUT NOT ENITELY DISCREDITED. WITHOUT DIMINISHING SERIOUSNESS OF SITUATION AS DESCRIBED BY SOURCE, WE THINK GOI MAY BE REACTING NOT ONLY TO EVENTS (WHICH ARE BAD ENOUGH) BUT TO ITS OWN DISAPPOINTMENT OVER COLLAPSE OF POLITICAL SOLUTION IN WHICH DUBLIN HAD ENORMOUS EMOTIONAL INVESTMENT. ASSESSMENT IN ANOTHER TWO MONTHS MAY BE MORE COOL, THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY MUCH DIFFERENT. IN MEANTIME, IT IS CLEARLY NOT TOO EARLY TO DO ANY USEFUL CONTINGENCY THINKING ON U.S. SIDE. WE HAVE MADE RECOMMENDATIONS IN RECENT CABLE (DUBLIN 0700) AND WILL FOLLOW UP IN PARA CONTRIBUTION. SORENSON

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NORTHERN IRELAND, POLITICAL SITUATION, ELECTIONS, PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974DUBLIN00800
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740162-0320
From: DUBLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740629/aaaaaytf.tel
Line Count: 216
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <24 MAR 2003 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOI ASSESSMENT OF NI SITUATION SUMMARY: WHILE GOI DOES NOT EXPECT IMMEDIATE INCREASE IN NI
TAGS: PINT, PBOR, EI, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005